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C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000671

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP AND PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [OPDC](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND CONDEMNS TERRORISM, HOSTAGE TAKING IN IRAQ -- BUT KEEPS ITS DISTANCE FROM USG ON IRAQ

REF: A. STATE 167045

[B](#). WELLINGTON 641 (NOTAL)

[C](#). WELLINGTON 652 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Pol/Economic Counselor,  
Timothy Zuniga-Brown, for reasons 1.5(B,D)

[1](#)1. (U) The GoNZ issued a press statement August 5 in support of the Multinational Force Iraq Statement on Terrorism (ref a). Foreign Minister Phil Goff reiterated statements condemning hostage takers (ref b) and affirming the GoNZ's pledge not to negotiate with terrorists.

[1](#)2. (U) Begin Text:

Press Release by New Zealand Government at 05 Aug 2004

Foreign Minister Phil Goff today reiterated New Zealand's condemnation of on-going terrorist attacks in Iraq as brutal and pointless.

Mr. Goff's comments support a statement by the Multinational Force condemning terrorist activities in Iraq and calling on countries not to bow to terrorists, demands.

"New Zealand did not support the military invasion of Iraq. However it strongly backs the United Nations-mandated political process now under way as restoring to Iraqis the power to determine their own future," Mr. Goff said.

"Terrorist attacks by dissident and foreign elements are mainly victimizing Iraqi people and standing in the way of self-determination and improved social and economic conditions.

"New Zealand also utterly condemns the taking and killing of hostages. We sympathize with the appalling situation faced by government whose citizens are taken hostage and threatened with execution unless terrorist demands are met.

"However we have stated firmly that giving in to such demands increases the probability of others being taken hostage and killed.

"I can only repeat the warnings we have issued to New Zealanders traveling to or in Iraq. The situation there is so dangerous that it does not justify the risk.

"If New Zealanders get into trouble in Iraq there is little the government can do to assist. We could not meet the conditions likely to be demanded to secure the release of any New Zealander held hostage there.

"Our message is clear ) New Zealanders should not go to Iraq, and those who are there should leave," Mr. Goff said.

End text.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: While on record as supporting the general principles expressed in the MNF Statement (ref b), the GoNZ struggled over whether it should publicly support the USG's announcement. Both the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) expressed concern (ref c) over the logistics on the MNF Statement, specifically whether or not a list of supporting countries would be attached to the Statement. MFAT representatives repeatedly referred to the GoNZ's clearly stated position that New Zealand is NOT/NOT a member of the Coalition, stating that the presence of 61 NZ military engineers in Basra is in fulfillment of its responsibilities as a UN member to UN Security Council resolutions (including 1483). While we should privately note the GoNZ ultimately did issue a concurrent statement supportive of our MNF stance, we should also fully note FM Goff's pointed reference to New Zealand's opposition to the invasion of Iraq and that the GoNZ has no desire to be associated with USG actions in Iraq.

[1](#)4. (U) Minimize considered.  
Swindells